UNOG Bi-weekly press briefing: Eastern Ukraine Update - OCHA

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Shotlist

1. Exterior wide shot, Palais des Nations flag alley, nations’ flags flying, a beautiful day.
2. Wide shot, podium with speaker in a near-empty Room XIV in line with COVID-19 distancing measures, Palais des Nations.
3. SOUNDbite (English) — Jens Laerke, spokesperson, OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs): “In Eastern Ukraine, the ceasefire that came into force on 27 July has now contributed to the longest period of relative calm since the beginning of the conflict in 2014. This reduction in hostilities has meant that 53 per cent drop in security incidents months to months between July and August, and then even larger reduction in civilian casualties.”
4. Medium shot, showing journalist, masked, using listening device in foreground, and journalist texting on mobile phone to rear, Room XIV, Palais des Nations.
5. SOUNDbite (English) — Jens Laerke, spokesperson, OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs): “Our colleagues in Ukraine tell us that this improvement has given people on both side of the contact line that divides Eastern Ukraine has sense of normality and people hope that it will become sustainable. But they also report that of so now, they have not observed changes in terms of humanitarian access that could lead to a scaling up of humanitarian work, and that is largely due to restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19.”
7. Medium shot, podium with speaker, Room XIV, Palais des Nations
8. Medium shot, showing journalist listening in foreground and UN staff member to rear, Room XIV,
Palais des Nations.
Eastern Ukraine: UN humanitarian office sees signs of hope in ‘relative calm’ after six years of violence

A protracted conflict in eastern Ukraine, in which more than 14,000 people are estimated to have been killed since violence first broke out in 2014, appears to be finally subsiding, according to the UN’s Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The “relative calm” in the region has come as direct result of a ceasefire in late July of this year, and OCHA spokesperson said on Friday.

“In Eastern Ukraine, the ceasefire that came into force on 27 July has now contributed to the longest period of relative calm since the beginning of the conflict in 2014,” Jens Laerke told reporters in Geneva.

"Eastern Ukraine has sense of normality and people hope that it will become sustainable," he added, underscoring how remarkable this is after years of fighting between Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian separatists.

Reported security incidents have dropped by more than half since the ceasefire - from 533 in July to 251 in August - Mr. Laerke said.

The improvement in the security situation has not yet led to improved access for those in need of humanitarian aid, however, owing to COVID-19. UN humanitarian partners in the region “have not observed changes in terms of humanitarian access that could lead to a scaling up of humanitarian work, and that is largely due to restrictions imposed in response to COVID-19”, Mr. Laerke said.